G U R U K U N C H U K U R U P
"LAXMI VILAS"

P.O.Kottayi
(PALGHAT--KERALA STATE)
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If I were asked to suggest two names from among the artistes of Bharata-Natyam to-day, I shall, without a moment of hesitation suggest Prof. U.S.Krishna Rao of Bangalore and his wife Smt. Chandrabhaga Devi. I have known this couple for quite a long period, Sri Krishna Rao himself having been my student in Kathakali for some years. I had also had several occasions to see both these artistes on the stage and my respect and admiration for the technique and standard of their performance have steadily grown with each performance. Shri Krishna Rao combines a very high standard of proficiency with a keen insight into the import and significance of each mudra, rendering thus his performances fully enjouable to all. Smt. Chandrabagha Devi by sheer grace of figure and fluency of steps is a delight to watch, her expressions and gestures leaving nothing untold. By study, practice and imagination they have successfully evolved a technique, which, while preserving the traditions of the great masters of this art, is essentially of a pattern all their own. It is difficult to mark them out by any single item in their vast repertoire: I have found them both brilliantly able and delightfully fluent in abhinaya and nritya, Time and Rhythm. Their Shankarabharanam Tillana (nearly as an instance to point) is a masterly piece of highly skilled Natya - scintillating steps with vibrancy and symmetry, fresh, vivid and intensely lively. I have no doubt anyone who has some knowledge of the art of dance will not fail to be impressed by the knowledge ability and care that have gone into its development.

With over 60 years of active life as an artists, my opportunities for study both the art of dancing and the person and personality of artistes were indeed quite large and varied. In noother country as fully as in India, is there evolved an intense coordination of the functions of mind and body capable of demonstrating to the minutest detail, by mudra, abhinaya and nritya all the aspirations and emotions of life. And DANCE as the manifest embodiment of all concepts of such values has a apre-eminent role in the life of every nations. No other activity closely concerned with the life of the people is a true mirror of their inherent qualities and an index of the capabilities towards roal and lasting progress.

On all of us who have anything to do with the art of dance therefore, rests the responsibility of preserving it within its traditions of purity and beauty and on the State and the Community develve the duty to diligently value the efforts of those artistes who are the torch-bearers of the nations's glory and progress.

I am fully aware how Srk U.S. Krishna Rao and Smt. Chandrabagha Devi have devoted their life to maintain, nourish and enrich this great classical art of India and I wish them both all the blessings to continue their good work for manymore years to come.

With deeply felt affection to them both:

Sd. KUNCHU KURUP.

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